

Kristýna VOJTÍŠKOVÁ:

Time, Space, and Ethics in Watsuji Tetsuro's Thought

My research project

The dissertation project is mainly focused on a critical evaluation of Watsuji Tetsurō's (1889-1960) moral philosophy. This work is based on a qualitative textual analysis of philosophical treatises *Climate* (*Fūdo*) and *Ethics* (*Rinrigaku*). In these major studies, Watsuji conceived an original ethical system which drew on Asian schools of thoughts and Western philosophy. The dissertation is divided into three major parts.

- (1) The first chapters discuss the sources of intellectual influences which considerably contributed to an articulation of Watsuji's ethical system (i.e. Heidegger, Nishida, Mahāyāna Buddhism). In part one, my aim is to untangle an intricate background of Watsuji's philosophy in order to read his thoughts through the lens of these influences, which disclose the limits and possibilities of his systematic ethics.
- (2) The second part of the dissertation is dedicated to Watsuji's ethical perspective on space-time. The very basis of my interpretation lies in a description of his transition from climatic space to "betweenness" (aidagara) as the essence of social being in *Ethics* on one hand, and transition from time as a climatic feature to a subjective time of human being as explained in *Ethics*. The aim of the second part is to define and examine Watsuji's systematic ethics based on the notion of emptiness as a dynamic unity of individuality and totality as well as subject and object.
- (3) The third major part re-evaluates Watsuji's ethical thought in order to demonstrate its applicability in disciplines such as phenomenology of natural science, environmental ethics or social psychology. Principally, I focus on the relationship between the individual, society, as well as the natural environment. In this part, I attempt to examine the extent to which Watsuji's ethical system contributes to contemporary discourses in the global society as well as the potential for future research.

Stay in Japan

I arrived in Tōkyō on the 17th of December 2016. Unfortunately, my two-month stay in Japan was overshadowed by a severe illness. Right on Monday 19th, I was invited to the Tōshiba headquarters in Hamamatsu-chō to meet the representatives of the Toshiba International Foundation, TIFO President Ōmori Keisuke, and Ms. Kuwayama Mariko. My initial plan back then was to attend the meeting and head for Ōsaka immediately to start my research activities. However, right after my arrival in Tokyo, unfortunately I fell ill with acute tonsillitis. Regrettably, on my third day in Japan I collapsed due to high fever and had to be hospitalized for a short time. In hospital, I was prescribed antibiotics. Adding to my bad luck, after an initial improvement of my health, I suffered an illness relapse shortly after my arrival in Ōsaka.



Overall it took almost a month to fully recover from the illness. I should mention here that during this whole period Tōshiba International Foundation's Senior Program Officer Ms. Kuwayama stayed in touch with me, helped me with gathering materials needed to get reimbursement for medical treatment from my insurance company and even translated a medical report to English for me so that I did not have to worry about arranging officially verified translation.

After the difficult beginnings, almost in mid-January, I was finally able to pursue my research. The range of research activities I could do during the illness period was limited to reading books, articles, and notes I gathered at conferences I participated in the previous year. Therefore, as soon as I was done with materials I had at my disposal, I ordered plenty of books from Book-offs, which turned out to be a treasure chest of works on Watsuji. In mid-January, I started researching in Ōsaka University libraries, focusing myself entirely on the structure and content of my dissertation thesis.

At first, I did not perceive any problems considering my dissertation's basic assumptions, as I had formulated them before my stay in Japan. However, the more I was immersed in my resources, the more I was aware of a need to re-evaluate my approach to Watsuji's notion of space-time and go back to the very roots of Watsuji's existential spatio-temporality $F\bar{u}do$. Watsuji criticizes Heidegger for not conceiving a persuasive analysis of human spatiality. Watsuji's perspective on existential spatiality, which was developed from this critique, was based on an assumption of a subjective approach to space-time. For Watsuji, space-time is a structure of human being that does not serve as a passive framework for being in the world.

I was struggling with Watsuji's holistic assumptions on space-time manifested in concrete human being, because I understood that I naturally tend to separate time, space, and human being, and view them as a "stage" and a "performer". In addition, I underestimated the importance of Watsuji's critique of Heidegger for my understanding of his concept of aidagara and $f\bar{u}do$.

However, when I was almost on the brink of giving up, a groundbreaking recognition occurred to me. It was at the beginning of February when I visited Saihōji (Kokedera) in Kyōto. As a part of the Saihōji experience, I attended sūtra chanting. As I and other visitors were chanting the Heart Sūtra (*Maka hannya haramita shingyō*), I felt an urgent feeling of finding myself not in space-time itself, but more in place and history, in *fūdo*, both shaping it and being shaped by it. Later I realized that what I was experiencing there was, in Watsujian sense, me contextualizing myself in the transient relational structure of existential space-time which interactively operated in the subjective, concrete, everyday being.

Encouraged by this occurrence, I returned back to the beginning of my research, went through everything I have written on Watsujian space-time and emptiness so far. Ultimately, I realized that precisely because I am immersed in aidagara and $f\bar{u}do$, I am able to objectify it as a



background of my being in common understanding, to distinguish time and history, space and place, and ask myself questions such as "how I dwell?" Right there, clearly, aidagara, fūdo, and emptiness showed its substantiality in everyday life. To put it simply, we are born into the world already immersed in the relational network of aidagara as an existential limit. Therefore, we are aidagara-making entities, we cannot help but perform our being as such because we are never divorced from the shared world that we were born into. To sum this up, aidagara correlates and unifies subject and object. Such a process precedes every human behaviour and no subsequent division of subject and object in objective cognition would be possible without it. In this sense, ethics appears to be fūdo-transforming mutual interaction of dualistic subjects within aidagara as a structure of human being manifested in specific social structures and human behavior.

In the light of the above-mentioned recognition, during the second month of my research in Japan, I tried to look at the second part of my dissertation from a different perspective. I found out that the whole time I was dealing with Watsuji, the actual problem of spatial and temporal emplacement of ethics appeared to be only ontological. The whole time I spent on Watsuji I did not see what was right before my very eyes. Naturally, this will have a considerable impact not only on part two and three of my dissertation but also on its entire structure. I hope that following this direction will throw a new light on sub-chapters of my work I was not satisfied with so far.

On the 18th of February, I returned to Tōkyō. My second meeting with Tōshiba International Foundation representatives was scheduled for Monday 20th. Ms. Kuwayama suggested an informal lunch. Over a bowl of delicious *kani chāhan*, we discussed my experience in Japan in a friendly atmosphere of a restaurant in Hamamatsu-chō. After the lunch, Ms. Kuwayama gave me a three-volume manga series *Kono Sekai no Katasumi ni*, which I perceive as a token of Ms. Kuwayama's warm-heartedness and kindness and I am deeply thankful for this beautiful present.

I departed from Narita next day, on the 21st of February with my luggage stuffed with books, and my head stuffed with impressions and good memories. Although, for the sake of a prolonged disease, I did not manage to achieve everything I had initially planned, the overall experience of my stay in Japan, was very important for me on many levels. First of all, I managed to go through most of the important materials I needed to scrutinize for my research, which would be impossible with my busy schedule here in Prague. Second, I was given the privilege to focus almost entirely on the structure and content of my dissertation, and to take a more detached view. Third, being continuously exposed to the Japanese environment on a daily basis, many times I found myself realizing that what I observed here was to a certain extent what I had read in Watsuji's works before. Such a recognition cast a new and fresh light on my general insight into the entire problem of ethics and space-time and hopefully provided me with an ability to see different angles of my research topic.



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Lewis BREMNER:

Magic Lanterns in Japan: The Making of a Public Communication Technology, from the Late Eighteenth to the Early Twentieth Century

Project Outline

My research looks at the history of magic lantern in Japan, examining its development as a public communication technology from the late eighteenth to the early twentieth century. In plain technical terms, the magic lantern is a relatively simple apparatus which enables pictures to be projected from glass slides onto a screen using a boxed light source, a mirror, and carefully aligned lenses. Yet, what it made possible for the Japanese of this period was the creation of unique enclosed worlds in which the attention of large audiences could be focused on particular messages, ideas, and images. This is a topic which has received very little attention from historians, partly because there has been a tendency to view the magic lantern as merely one minor artefact amongst a deluge of Western commodities flowing into Japan during this period. However, my research argues not only that the usage of the magic lantern had an especially significant social and cultural impact in Japan, but also that the scope and manner of this impact was chiefly determined by the Japanese themselves.

In comparative research prior to my trip to Japan, I explored the history of magic lanterns in other Asian countries, and found none which developed or utilised the technology to anywhere near the same extent that the Japanese did in the nineteenth century. The device was not recorded in China until the mid-1890s, for example, nor did it reach Korea, Malaysia, or Taiwan until the same decade. In most countries that I looked at, the period between the introduction of the magic lantern and the establishment of cinema was so brief that the former technology barely made a mark. Moreover, there are extremely few examples of magic lantern production or usage among local populations. Instead, it was often Western missionaries, or occasionally, in the cases of Taiwan and Korea, Japanese colonialists who imported and utilised the device. The only instance of a local population using and innovating with magic lantern technology in this period on a level even slightly comparable with Japan was in India, where a form of magic lantern show known as *shambarik kharolika* gained considerable and lasting popularity beginning in the 1890s. Yet, the first appearance of the device in India was around 1880, a full century after the Japanese began using it.

To explain why the history of the magic lantern in Japan is so much more extensive and varied than elsewhere in Asia, a fundamental shift in approach is necessary. Rather than viewing the magic lantern as simply another instance of Western influence on Japan, my research looks at the influence of Japan on the magic lantern. Why did certain people in Japan want to obtain the device, who were those people, and what were their aims for its application? What were the factors within Japanese society which brought about its early introduction into the country, and which facilitated or shaped its subsequent development in the country?



Archival Research

I wrote in the original project outline which I submitted to the EAJS that I was interested in the ways in which the spectacle of magic lantern shows was "underpinned by innovations made by Japanese manufacturers [and] exploited by Japanese educators, entertainers, religious groups, politicians, labour activists, and many others." My time in the archives here in Japan has predominantly been spent trying to uncover new information about these overlooked Japanese men and women, to understand first of all their motivations for using the magic lantern, and secondly how those motivations might be connected both to changes in the technology over time and to the impact that it had on audiences and society at large. Some of the most substantial written sources which I have collected or consulted so far include:

- The papers of Tejima Seiichi, a government official in the Meiji era who was not only a
 prominent advocate of the utilisation of the magic lantern for educational purposes,
 but also responsible for introducing to Japan in the mid-1870s a model which could
 show photographic slides. (Earlier models could show only painted or engraved slides.)
- The published books of Kitensai Shōichi, a showman and magician who was one of the earliest popular adopters of the new model of magic lantern introduced by Tejima Seiichi. Alongside Kitensai's own writings, newspapers sources have also helped me to flesh out the details of this little-known performer's involvement with the magic lantern. His well-attended events, which he staged across Japan, could last up to seven hours, and involved not only spectral illusions and conjuring tricks using the magic lantern, but also what were described as "civilisation spectacles" parts of the show in which illustrative slides were used to convey to the audience the progress being made across Japan in disease prevention, political reform, urban planning, and so forth.
- Narration booklets and related materials from some of the most widely seen magic lanterns campaigns of the Meiji era. Many of these campaigns were organised and run by state officials, and comprised of instructive lessons on matters such as hygiene, morals, or developments in agriculture and technology. In addition, though, I have also been able to study a significant number of sources from campaigns which were directed by private organisations or individuals, particularly those which used magic lantern events to raise funds for the victims of natural disasters or for war relief during the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese Wars.
- The public and private writings of Ishiguro Tadanori, the Surgeon General of the
 Japanese Army, whose nationwide promotional magic lantern tour in the early 1890s
 was a major factor in the growth of the Japanese Red Cross Society. The surviving
 material from this campaign includes not only narration booklets and scripts but also
 replicas the original magic lantern slides.
- The works of Nagaoka Tsuruzō, a socialist and union organiser who in 1903, influenced by other left-wing activists such as Katayama Sen and Nishikawa Mitsujirō, began the



magic lantern to communicate his ideas to largely illiterate audiences of labourers. Until 1907, he was chiefly based at the Ashio Copper Mine. The magic lantern lectures which he presented during this time, despite often taking place within the limited confines of the mineworker's dormitories, attracted huge crowds and may have contributed significantly the growth of the labour movement at Ashio.

Magic lantern manuals and handbooks published by Toraku Ikeda, a notable producer
of magic lanterns and magic lantern slides in the nineteenth and early twentieth
century. Toraku's business was started by his father, Toraku Miyakoya, who first began
manufacturing magic lanterns in 1804, making it almost certainly the longest
continuous producer of magic lanterns in Japan.

As well as the sources listed above, there are three other groups of material which have been a significant part of my research in Japan.

- 1) I have sought out the very earliest references to the device in Japan across a wide range of written sources, most of which were accessed in the National Diet Library either as physical resources or on microfilm. These include local guidebooks, such as Hamamatsu Utakuni's Settsuyō kikan ("Wonders of Settsu Province"); foreign-word dictionaries such as Morishima Chūryō's Bango-sen ("Language of the Barbarians"); books of magic tricks, such as Hirase Tessai's Tengutsū ("The Goblin's Nose"); satirical social commentaries such as Jippensha Ikku's Oranda kage-e otsuriki ("Dutch Shadow Pictures: What Fun!") and Koikawa Harumachi's Muda iki ("Useless Records"); and studies of Western culture such as Sugita Genpaku's Rangaku kotohajime ("The Beginnings of Dutch Studies") and Ōtsuki Gentaku's Ransetsu benwaku ("Misunderstandings About The Dutch").
- 2) The main sources which I have turned to for descriptions of audience experiences at magic lantern shows have been contemporary newspapers and magazines. In addition, though, many writers who grew up in the Meiji era, such as Terada Torahiko, Kimura Shōshū, and Oka Onitarō, would later recall their childhood experiences of attending magic lanterns shows, depicting an atmosphere of excitement, surprise, and sensorial immersion among the often-enormous gatherings at these events.
- 3) Finally, I have also located, viewed, and copied sets of the magic lantern slides themselves. Waseda University's Tsubouchi Memorial Theatre Museum has perhaps the largest collections of Japanese glass slides, numbering over 3,000, as well as a collection of magic lantern projectors. Elsewhere, I have also managed to view physical slides from the Tokugawa and Meiji eras in the collections of the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography and the National Museum of Science and Nature. I had originally planned a trip to the Hyogo Prefectural Museum of History in Kobe, but was able to secure digital copies of the slides which I had hoped to view, and so was able to instead spend that time fruitfully in Tokyo. This change in schedule also allowed me the time to make a quick visit in early March to the Yokohama Archives of History,



which also has a small collection of magic lantern slides from the Meiji period, most of them intended as souvenirs for foreign visitors and tourists.

The amount of transcribed, copied, photographed, and scanned material which I have accumulated is already considerable, with much more to be added to the pile over my remaining weeks in Japan. This is, therefore, only the beginning of a long process of translation, analysis, and writing-up, and as a result I am hesitant to pronounce any firm findings or conclusions at this stage. Nonetheless, I can say that these few months have been more productive and rewarding than I could have hoped, not least because of the kindness and gracious assistance which I have encountered so often during my visit.

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Sigfrid ÖSTBERG:

Diplomatic praxis and culture in Japanese–Korean relations, 1811–1876

My current thesis project is concerned with diplomatic praxis and diplomatic culture in nineteenth-century Japanese–Korean relations. I aim to trace both continuities and changes in the relations between the two countries from the perspective of diplomats engaged in direct negotiations on the frontier. By moving the focus from the capitals and centres, I hope to enrich the common narrative that emphasises decline in the first half of the century, instead framing it as a period of innovative reconfiguration, thus shedding light on the options available and the many choices made. In extension, I am asking what working-level diplomacy in East Asia consisted of and what it meant to those who practised it.

The traditional historiography of early-modern Japanese—Korean relations, often mirroring that of early-modern Japan and Korea in general, generally follows a narrative of recovery and consolidation in the first half of the seventeenth century, an apogean period of rich cultural exchange and flourishing trade towards the end of the seventeenth century and in the early the eighteenth century, and gradual decline into the nineteenth century, culminating in the breakdown of diplomacy in the Taewŏn'gun years and finally in the Kanghwa Island Treaty of 1876, foreshadowing Japanese imperial domination of Korea.

With such a narrative in mind, the early and mid-nineteenth century naturally appears as little more than a transitional period that transports us from the heyday of Japanese–Korean exchange to the emergence of Japanese expansionism. Yet, this narrative prompts two important questions. Firstly, how can we explain the historical change that so fundamentally turned on its head the amicable relations of the early eighteenth century? Indeed, the congenial atmosphere that surrounded the 1811 embassy stands in sharp contrast with the rise of the *seikanron* during the early Meiji period. Secondly, does this emphasis on rupture not obfuscate the very real circumstances of the people living through those times as they sought to adapt to changing situations without any knowledge of what was to come? The second question relates especially to those living and working in Tongnae County, the Ch'oryang Japan House, and Tsushima.

There is no doubt that the nineteenth century was transformative, leaving East Asia profoundly different, but what was the nature of those changes? The periodisation that separates the pre-modern from the modern—even when leaving out the perennial problem of how to define modernity—is helpful insofar as it highlights the manifold and interlinked changes that did occur, but a periodisation that juxtaposes 'pre-modern' against 'modern' can be equally befuddling when it is allowed to stress rupture at the expense of continuity. I approach the diplomacy of Korean–Japanese relations in the nineteenth century as a field of innovative reconfiguration of tradition. Innovation and tradition were not necessarily at odds, and continuity was very real even if not so apparent.



I trace these continuities, changes, and innovative reconfigurations over a long period of time, from the end of what may be termed a long eighteenth century to the dawn of what we know as the modern era. I also move between different levels of diplomatic interaction, from the inter-state events that were the Communication Embassies to the routine meetings of local officials and anonymous dealings of smugglers. Throughout, I emphasise the role of individuals as agents of innovation, whose deeds and choices explored the limits of what was possible in their worlds.

Research in Japan

I arrived in Tokyo on 15 November, 2016, and took up residence at a dormitory in Komaba, Meguro Ward, belonging to the University of Tokyo. This was thanks to the Institute of Advanced Studies on Asia, University of Tokyo, having granted me affiliation as a visiting researcher. This has also been very helpful since it gave me access to libraries at both the Hongō and the Komaba campuses. Since I will remain in Japan until mid-May, this is only an interim report, but hopefully it will give some idea of my work.

The bulk of primary sources that I have consulted whilst in Tokyo are held by the National Diet Library in Chiyoda Ward. I did not view the documents in original since they are available on microfilm. They are easily accessible in the Rare Books and Old Materials Room. The library has made a vast amount of documents available online, but many of those I am interested are missing, so visiting the library in person was essential. The most important source at the National Diet Library are the Kanshu nikki 館守日記, that is, the diaries kept by the Japan House Masters. These were meticulously kept throughout the Tokugawa period and we have extant volumes until the Meiji period. The Japan House Master was the top Japanese official supervising activities at the Ch'oryang Japan House, including diplomatic ceremony, trade, and preserving order. The diary is invaluable as a resource for understanding daily life at the Japan House, a space that existed between Tongnae County and Tsushima Domain. It is especially precious as a source for the Japan House in the mid-nineteenth century, because that is a period when one can no longer rely on official compilations of cases and precedents, such as the Pyŏllye chibyo 邊例集要 or the Bunrui kiji taikō 分類紀事大綱 as they stopped being updated around that time. One example of an innovative negotiating tactic that does not seem to appear in other sources is the Japan House Master's decision in 1864 to routinely hinder Korean interpreters from leaving the Japan House compound as a way to protest incomplete deliveries of rice.

One event that I have looked into is the 'Defection Incident' of 1836. It is known as such because it started with a Korean man calling himself Nam P'ilson asking that the Japan House take him in and grant him passage to Japan. The reason, he claimed, was that he had acquired information about Korean plans to launch a military attack against Japan. What is interesting about this event is how the Japan House and the Tsushima leadership finally decided to resolve it, and how it demonstrates the semi-independent agency possessed by the various parties



involved as they interacted with each other. The Japan House Master exhibited a definite ability to make decisions on his own as the matter was handled swiftly. Based on a calculation of risk and return, it was decided that harbouring Nam P'ilsŏn would carry little merit, also in the event that the Japan House turned into a war zone. If so, it was more important to appease the Koreans in case the man was lying. Between the uncertainty of a possible Korean attack and the desire to maintain the status quo, they chose to garner favour from the Korean authorities by handing over Nam. In the end, he was convicted and executed for treason in Korea. At the same time, Tsushima consistently sought to control information to keep the bakufu from misunderstanding the situation. The incident was finally concluded when Tsushima dispatched a new kind of diplomatic mission to Tongnae—known as the taijōshi 体情使—so as to innovatively fit the affair into the existing framework of diplomatic intercourse.

I also had the opportunity to visit the University of Tsukuba Library, where I read the Taiyū nikki 対遊日記 by Neo-Confucian scholar Takatsu (Higuchi) Shisen (included in the Tenkarō sōsho 天香楼叢書, vol. 76). The diary details Shisen's journey to Tsushima as part of the group of receptionary Confucian scholars who welcomed the Korean embassy of 1811 to that island domain. This was to become the final Communication Embassy to Japan, but to its participants it was more of a new start, the beginning of a new chapter of Japanese—Korean high-level diplomacy. Shisen's diary reveals aspects of the Japanese preparations for the embassy not seen elsewhere. Notable, it details how Koga Seiri's group—of which Shisen was part—practised 'brush conversation' (writing in literary Chinese was the easiest way for Japanese and Korean scholars to directly communicate with each other) on their way to Tsushima. It shows their efforts to show off the very best of Japanese learning, whilst they were equally full of respect for Korean scholarship. The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries had seen growing ethnocentrism in East Asia, a development that would have great ramifications, but we also need to acknowledge the efforts that were made both in Japan and Korea to further better understanding and mutual respect.

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